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## Previously overlooked museum specimens of White-winged Potoo *Nyctibius leucopterus* Wied 1821

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The enigmatic White-winged Potoo *Nyctibius leucopterus* is one of the smallest and least known of the seven species of potoos (Cleere 1998, Cohn-Haft 1999, Holyoak 2001). It is poorly represented in natural history museum collections, which until recently were thought to contain just two specimens. One is the female holotype, collected in Bahia, Brazil (Wied 1821), the other an unsexed adult (female?) with no supporting data but also thought to have been collected in Brazil. Both are in North American institutions, the holotype in the American Museum of Natural History, New York (AMNH 5867), and the data-less specimen in the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia (ANSP 22022), both of which I have examined (Figs. 1–2). In addition, four other specimens have been attributed to this species. Lafresnaye (1863) included two specimens in his collection catalogue, an adult male (no. 839) and an adult female (no. 840). The male, now in the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard (MCZ 76549), is actually a Common Potoo *Nyctibius griseus* (pers. obs.), whilst the whereabouts of the female are unknown. Greenway (1978) listed AMNH 5868, a male collected in Bahia in 1817 for Prince Wied-Neuwied, as a syntype, but it too is a *N. griseus* (Chapman 1926, Schulenberg *et al.* 1984, Cohn-Haft 1993). Another specimen, the victim of a road-traffic incident in coastal northern Bahia (Grantsau *et al.* 1999), was re-identified as *N. griseus* by Whitney *et al.* (2003).

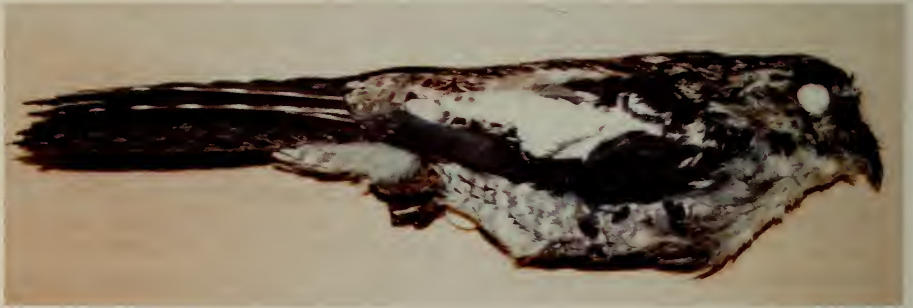
Following its description (Wied 1821), White-winged Potoo remained unknown for over 150 years. It was eventually rediscovered near Manaus in Amazonas, northern Brazil, in August 1989, although a roosting bird had previously been observed at the same site in October 1985 (Cohn-Haft 1993). During the pioneering work undertaken by Cohn-Haft, recordings of the bird's vocalisations were obtained, widely circulated and subsequently published by others (e.g. Ranft &



1



2



3



4

TABLE 1

Biometrics of the four historical museum specimens of White-winged Potoo *Nyctibius leucopterus*.

Specimen	Sex	Wing (mm)	Tail (mm)
AMNH 5867	female	207	140
ANSP 22022	unsexed	202	132
RBINS 6903	female	222	142
SMF 29869	male	213	136

Cleere 1998). Since its rediscovery, White-winged Potoo has proved to be widely distributed in Amazonia, in northern Peru, central French Guiana, central and south-west Guyana, and at several sites in Brazil (Peres & Whittaker 1991, Parker *et al.* 1993, Borges *et al.* 2001, Alvarez Alonso & Whitney 2003, Claessens *et al.* 2005). At least ten individuals have been collected and deposited in museum collections in North and South America. Based on the consistently small size of these specimens relative to the two historical specimens (Cohn-Haft unpubl. data; NC pers. obs.), Cohn-Haft (1993, 1999) suggested that Amazonian birds represent a distinct population and is currently describing them as a new taxon (M. Cohn-Haft pers. comm.). Meanwhile, the Bahian population was only recently rediscovered (Whitney *et al.* 2003) and continues to lack any modern specimens.

In light of the above, it is important to place on record the existence of two other specimens that date well before the modern records and appear to have gone largely unnoticed in the literature. The first is an adult female (Fig. 3) held in the Royal Belgium Institute of Natural Sciences, Brussels, Belgium (RBINS 6903), collected in Brazil and received from the Verreaux brothers, dealers who were trading in the mid 1800s. The second is an adult male (Fig. 4) collected in America (=Bahia?), deposited in the Forschungsinstitut Senckenberg, Frankfurt, Germany (SMF 29869) that was formerly in the Berlepsch collection (no. 7949). Von Berlepsch, who presumably added Bahia to his label on the basis that it was from the same region as the type, had obtained the specimen from T. C. Eyton, who listed it as species no. 207 in his catalogue (Eyton 1856).

All four historical specimens are similar in size (see Table 1) and plumage (pers. obs.). If birds from Amazonia are smaller and represent a distinct population (Cohn-Haft 1993, 1999), then it appears reasonable to infer that the two 'new' specimens

#### Captions to plates on opposite page

Figure 1. The adult female holotype of White-winged Potoo *Nyctibius leucopterus* (AMNH 5867) from Bahia, Brazil (Nigel Cleere)

Figure 2. Unsexed adult (perhaps female) White-winged Potoo *Nyctibius leucopterus* (ANSP 22022) (Nigel Cleere)

Figure 3. Adult female White-winged Potoo *Nyctibius leucopterus* (RBINS 6903) from Brazil (Nigel Cleere)

Figure 4. Adult male White-winged Potoo *Nyctibius leucopterus* (SMF 29869) from Bahia?, Brazil (Nigel Cleere)

represent the third and fourth examples of a non-Amazonian population, which to date is known only from lowland Atlantic Forest in the Brazilian state of Bahia.

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